



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
MAYOR JERRY SANDERS

## San Diego Public Library Department

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Award Winning Environmental Documentary, Libby Montana to Screen at San Diego Public Library**

***Hard-working, Close-knit Community Faces 70-year Legacy of Asbestos Poisoning and Industry Cover-up***

**SAN DIEGO** –San Diego Public Library invites you to a film screening of *Libby Montana*, the award winning documentary by Drury Gunn Carr and Doug Hawes-Davis. The screening takes place at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 7, in the auditorium of the Central Library, located at 820 E Street in downtown San Diego. This event is free and open to the public.

Libby, Montana is first of all the story of an ideal American community, nestled below the rugged peaks of the Northern Rockies along the Kootenai River. Libby is the archetypal backpacker's, hunter's and angler's paradise, as well as a picture-perfect example of the American wilderness that environmentalists want to save. At the same time, the town's remoteness its logging and mining economy nurtured conservative, self-reliant family and community values.

But Libby, Montana is also the story of an ideal betrayed in a way that crosses political lines and raises alarming questions about the role of corporate power in American politics and the environmental pollution that extracts its highest costs from ordinary citizens. In Libby, 70 years of strip-mining an ore called "vermiculite" and marketed as the wonder material "Zonolite" exposed workers, their families, and thousands of residents to a toxic form of asbestos, creating what the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has called the worst case of industrial poisoning of a whole community in American history. That this poisoning continued for more

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than 30 years after W. R. Grace knew of the dangers — as charged in criminal indictments that went trial this fall — is made patent by the film even as the company raised a curious no-denial defense.

In examining the politics behind the cleanup, as well as behind Grace's historic ability to disregard worker health, *Libby, Montana* raises its most troubling questions. How could Grace go on operating the mine for another 20 years after the environmental toxicity became public knowledge? (It was finally closed in 1990.) Even in pro-business Montana, how could state officials continue to cover for a company that declared bankruptcy to avoid liability claims as it allegedly spirited away billions of dollars? By what final cruel twist does the National Priorities Superfund designation sought by townspeople as the only means to fund the cleanup — and opposed by Grace and local business interests — become the very means by which Grace finally abandons the town to taxpayers?

*Since 1988, PBS' "POV" series has brought the best of independent point-of-view documentaries to a national audience, featuring the work of America's most innovative documentary filmmakers to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues.*

Learn about other events at the San Diego Public Library's Central Library and 35 branches, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library's catalog online at [www.sandiegolibrary.org](http://www.sandiegolibrary.org)

*The City of San Diego Public Library – Your Link to the Past and Gateway to the Future*

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